

- First Suffraget Plot In Egypt -

James Baikie, in Communication to National Geographic Society, Describes Occurrence in Ancient History.

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 5.—What was probably the first suffraget plot in history is described by James Baikie in a communication to the National Geographic society, summarizing the more recent explorations and excavations in Egypt which have done much to reveal the history of an ancient world power.

"We have a very full record of the process against certain women of the harem of King Ramesses III. of the 20th dynasty, which exhibits the harem intrigue in all its familiar features," writes Mr. Baikie. "Officials of the harem are bribed, messages are sent out to officers of the troops from the secluded women, inviting the help of the army to overthrow the king and set up a pretender, and the resources of witchcraft are called in to insure the success of the scheme. In this case even the discovery of the plot did not put an end to the machinations of those concerned. The judges in the trial were tampered with, and the result was a highly discreditable execution of the corruption of the Egyptian bench as well as that of the harem."

Egyptian Women's Position.
Continuing his discussion of the position of women in ancient Egypt, Mr. Baikie says:

"Though there are certain features, such as their loose ideas in the matter of consanguinity, which shock our modern sense of morality, the ideas and practice of the ancient Egyptians in respect to the position of woman are remarkably advanced and rational, commencing very favorably with those of the great nations of classical antiquity. Woman was to the Egyptian not the slave of man or the minister of his pleasures; she was his com-equal terms, often his adviser, not infrequently his ruler.

"There existed in the Egyptian mind a sentiment that could almost be called reverence for womanhood, particularly in respect of its great function of motherhood—a sentiment which is much more akin to our modern western view than anything else that we meet with among ancient peoples. The mother was respected for her supreme share in the life and upbringing of her children, and for all the self-sacrifice which is essentially involved in true motherhood, and from the very earliest days the child was carefully indoctrinated with the duty of reverencing and loving the mother who bore and nourished him. So strong was this sentiment that on the tombs of the old kingdom the mother of the deceased is as a rule represented together with his wife, while the father rarely appears.

"In noble Egyptian families the general, though not invariably, custom was that the heir of the house was not the eldest son, but the son of the eldest daughter. Under the middle kingdom this rule prevailed to such an extent that the inheritance passed from one family to another through heiresses. He who married an heiress gained for his son the inheritance of his father-in-law.

Men All Had Harems.
"Men of the upper classes had their harems. Pharaoh himself appears in all ages to have been the possessor of a large harem. Under the empire the harem was supervised by an elderly matron, and was administered by high officials—the governor of the royal harem. The scribe of the royal harem, the delegate for the harem—while a number of slaves watched over the women and guarded them from the outside world. The scale to which such an establishment could attain is illustrated by the case of Amenhotep III. When the king of Mitanni sent him his daughter, Gilukhepa in marriage, the young woman was accompanied by a train of 317 maidens, who were no doubt added to the royal harem."

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